



# Voice Of The North Woods

*Focused on Excellence—Putting Veterans First*



A PUBLICATION OF THE  
OSCAR G. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER  
December 2012-January 2013

## Inside This Issue:

- Service Spotlight 2
- Construction Update 2
- Adopt-a-Family 3
- Caught on Camera 2, 3
- CREW a Success 4
- Kudos 5
- Employee Spotlight 6
- Calendar of Events 6

## Health Tip Of The Day!



Take the **1st** step on the road to right prevention... Consider the **“Simple 7” heart health factors**:

- Get Active
- Control Cholesterol
- Eat Better
- Manage Blood Pressure
- Reduce Blood Sugar
- Stop Smoking
- Lose Weight

Take the American Heart Association's My Life Check at [www.mylifecheck.org](http://www.mylifecheck.org).

**VA HEALTH CARE** | Defining **EXCELLENCE** in the 21st Century



## Seasons Greetings!



### New Hospice/Palliative Care Rooms at OGJVAMC

The medical center recently completed construction on four spacious palliative care rooms in its 40-bed Community Living Center. Rooms include a small living and kitchenette area. “These rooms will provide a much more comfortable environment for both the Veteran and his or her family as they deal with a chronic disease or terminal diagnosis,” said Selena Okler, the medical center's Palliative Care RN.

Hospice and palliative care is specialized, multidisciplinary care focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain and stresses of a serious or terminal illness. *Hospice care* is a comfort based form of care for patients who have six months or less to live. Unlike hospice, *palliative care* is a form of treatment that emphasizes comfort care for patients with curable illnesses or chronic diseases.

OGJVAMC has an active Hospice and Palliative Care Program for Veterans in both inpatient and home-based care. VA services include palliative care consultation, inpatient hospice or palliative care, home-based primary care, and contracts with area home health and hospice agencies. A team of specially trained and certified nurses, providers, social workers, dieticians, therapists, and the medical center chaplain support the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of Veterans in the program. **For more photos of Mr. Runge's Butterfly Wish and the new palliative care rooms, check out OGJVAMC facebook posts on December 7 and November 16, respectively at [www.facebook.com/vaironmountain](http://www.facebook.com/vaironmountain) (you do not need a FB account to view)** ♦



*Veterans Vernon Runge and William Keller are two of the first patients to occupy the new palliative care rooms. With them are some of the Hospice/Palliative Care Team, front row (l to r) Michelle Pirkola, Mr. Runge, Mr. Keller and Theresa Schultz. 2nd Row: Cindie Trevillion, Selena Okler; Katie Uren, Nikki Janczy, Dan Throm and Dr. Cynthia Gannon.*



*Left to right: Vernon Runge enjoying his Christmas decorations in his palliative care room, fulfilling his Butterfly Wish; dinette area; living area and bed with wall dividers.*



## Service Spotlight: The Call Center



OGJVAMC Call Center staff from left to right: Angela Hart, Samantha Ackley, Dick Page, and Valerie Faught.

When a Veteran or family member calls OGJVAMC's main phone number (x33115), they will get one of four employees in the Call Center—Angela, Sam, Dick or Valerie. They are literally the “Voice” of the VA. They currently coordinate the scheduling for six IM providers, seventeen specialty clinics and four CBOC's. They also work closely with each of the care team members to ensure that the scheduling is done properly. Call Center staff also utilizes Message Manager to ensure all applicable staff are aware of Veteran needs. Last year, the Call Center answered in excess of 59,000 calls! In addition to scheduling, they work with the Veteran for: medication renewals and refills, doctor recalls and follow ups, routing to telephone triage in Madison, and assisting with the medication hotline. “We are that kind voice for Veterans,” said Dick Page. “Sometimes they are upset, and we do our best to turn that around.” ♦

## Nutrition Tip Of The Day!



Eat healthy & be physically active during the holidays! Offer tasty, healthy foods in a fun, active environment. Try out new, healthier recipes and find ways to cut back on sugar, salt and fat as you prepare family favorites. Food & drinks are part of holiday festivities, but they do not have to be the center of the occasion. Focus on activities to get people moving and enjoying being together. For more tips go to:

[www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet20MakeCelebrations.pdf](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet20MakeCelebrations.pdf)

## OGJVAMC Construction Update

6th floor construction is ongoing and completion is tentatively scheduled for late June 2013. The 6th floor will house Lab, Home Based Primary Care, Voluntary Service, Credit Union, Library, Nurse Education, and a shared conference room. The **3rd Floor** Construction has moved into the 2nd Phase, which includes the new Dental Service space, public restrooms, and 3rd floor waiting area. This phase is scheduled to be completed in early April 2013, with the 3rd and final phase located within Behavioral Health to be completed in early June, 2013. ♦



Voluntary Service space on the 6th floor.

## Caught on Camera



Left: Isaac Armstrong—OGJVAMC Veterans Transportation Coordinator, SSGT in the Army National Guard, and combat Veteran—speaking to KHS student assembly on Veterans Day.

Right: Jim Rice, Medical Center Director, and Mary Beth Skupien, Chief, Office of Rural Health, conducting a VA listening session at the Sault Tribe Health Center on October 9.





# Adopt-a-Family



The Adopt-A-Family program has been very popular with employees and volunteers of the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center for the past fifteen years. The program is coordinated by the medical center's Equal Employment Opportunity Committee, with support from the Oscar G. Johnson Employees Association, and provides for local families who are experiencing hardships due to illness, financial struggles and other unforeseen circumstances.

In 1996, the Iron Mountain VA sponsored the first facility-wide Adopt-a-Family event. Since the program began, an abundance of local families have received help for the holidays through generous donations from everyone involved. Employees of the medical center also assist with deliveries to the family's homes.



*Coordinators of the Adopt-A-Family project from left are MaryAnne Gibler, Rita Rosen, Angela Finley and Raegen Walter.*

Holiday trees are decorated with Christmas gift tags listing items of need for the families and displayed throughout the medical center. This year the VA Medical Center is also donating to the Caring House of Iron Mountain and the "Almost Home" Animal Shelter of Dickinson County. Numerous wrapped gifts, toys, food items and gift cards are being collected and will be delivered to the families and organizations before the holidays.

If you are interested in donating to this worthy cause, please contact Angela Finley, Adopt-A-Family Coordinator, at 906-774-3300, extension 33320. ♦

## VAntage Point Articles of Interest

With each passing year, the ranks of WWII Veterans get smaller - 600 per day on average. Here is a blog article on December 7th with imbedded links.

[www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/8458/remembering-the-infamy-and-the-valor/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/8458/remembering-the-infamy-and-the-valor/)

Another article on a December 7th Honor Flight

[www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/8444/wwii-vets-to-gather-at-memorial-to-remember-pearl-harbor/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/8444/wwii-vets-to-gather-at-memorial-to-remember-pearl-harbor/)

## Caught on Camera (con't)



OGJVAMC Nurse Managers (l to r): Lisa Esqueda (Surgery), Tanya Edwards (CLC), Deb Ruohomaki (Primary Care), Linda Haleen (ICU), Jill Bruno-Enright (CBOCs), Kim Mitchell (4East). Not pictured (but whose name is on the paper): Kit Demuri. (Respiratory Therapy).



Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus at the Employee's Assoc. Children's Christmas Party on December 6 with Holly Schroeder (NESS) and her sons (l to r), Jonathan, Matthew, and Dillon. Santa is Steve Howard (retired VA employee) and Mrs Claus is Dawn Rompalski (PAS-AOD).



Rhinelander CBOC showing team spirit, although a little conflicting. From l to r, kneeling : Steve Umbarger (clerk), Rodney Linder (psychologist); 2nd row: Terri Umbarger (LPN), Becky Grant (LPN), Angela Cournoyer (Pharmacist), Ellen Jennings (LPN), Sandy Bergman (Clerk), Nancy Kofler (LPN), Mark Martello (Social Worker); back row: Karen Hagen (NP), Penny Belland (RN), Leslie Bruns (NP), Lisa Calhoun (clerk), Melissa Campbell (RN). Not pictured: Ann Marie Frankini (NP), Tim Bahr (Peer Support Specialist).





## Implementation of CREW a Success

**H**ave you ever dealt with a rude e-mail, telephone call or even face-to-face interaction during your normal workday? Many people have experienced this type of behavior in some form or another. OGJVAMC is working hard at minimizing this type of behavior by aggressively implementing CREW, which stands for **Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce**. Per the CREW workbook, “Being civil means being constantly aware of others and weaving restraint, respect, and consideration into the very fabric of this awareness.”

Medical center leadership is committed to giving staff the tools needed to be cognizant of their behavior towards one another as well as towards patients and family members. This included allowing the CREW team to convert the vacant medical center director quarters into a CREW training center.

CREW was introduced in November 2011, and five staff members were selected and trained by VHA as CREW facilitators – Maryanne Gibler, Barbara Robinson, Brenda Reed, Karen Krebsbach and Lisa Basanese. The CREW team carefully reviewed 2011 All Employee Survey (AES) scores and decided to implement CREW to services with scores that teetered between being good to being great.

OGJVAMC graduated its first CREW class from the Finance Service in July. This group had good 2011 AES scores. However, the goal was to move them

from good to great. There were numerous weekly CREW sessions and a lot of hard work by both Finance management and staff.

This effort paid off as the 2012 AES scores im-

***“Being civil means being constantly aware of others and weaving restraint, respect, and consideration into the very fabric of this awareness.”***

proved in 21 areas including a 70% improvement in Organizational Assessment Inventory (Work Type, Co-Worker, Supervision, Praise and Satisfaction) and a 54% improvement in the Organizational Assessment Inventory (conflict resolution, psychological safety, co worker support, supervisory support, customer service, etc.).

In November, the Bio-Med and OI&T group graduated. The employees who participated felt the program was worthwhile and that they were happy that they committed to the goals outlined by the group. CREW is a wonderful program that greatly aids the staff to excel in the goal of *focusing on excellence and putting Veterans first*. OGJVAMC is proud of its staff and the care that they give to not only patients but to each other. ♦



Above: Barb Robinson, CREW facilitator, starts the first CREW session with OI&T in the converted Director's Quarters.

Left: Finance Service staff are the first to graduate from the CREW program. Left to right, front: Dean Finley, Jim Rice (Director), Don Lynch; back: Karen Krebsbach (facilitator), Karen Burkman, Mary Lee, Wendy Welch, Mary Deyaert, Christine Watts, Raegen Walter (facilitator), and Lisa Basanese (facilitator).





## Employees of the Month



September: **Stacy Casanova, RN**, Home Based Primary Care Service. Stacy is recognized for her persistence in coordinating VA health care for a home bound Veteran working with both VA and non-VA health care providers. Stacy has been employed at OGJVAMC since 2008.



October: **Caren Kazukiewicz, CRT**, Respiratory Care Service. Caren is recognized for going above and beyond by going to local music stores on her own time to find and download a hospice patient's favorite music, which greatly comforted the patient. Caren has been employed at OGJVAMC since 2008 .

## Leadership Training Certificate

Congratulations to **Karen Krebsbach, LMSW**, Behavioral Health Service, for completing all eight course modules of the VA Social Work Leadership Training entitled The Legacy of Leadership: A Roadmap to Success.



## \$35,759 raised for CFC!

Congratulations, employees at OGJVAMC and its Community Outpatient Clinics exceeded our goal of \$32,000 for the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign. A total of \$35,759 was raised. A big thank you to those who gave to the charity of their choice through CFC to help out people in need, as well as to the CFC committee and service-level key persons.

*Please notify OGJVAMC Public Affairs of any employees receiving professional certificates, awards or recognition.*



# Employee Spotlight!

## Welcome To OGVAMC!

<b>Dental</b>	<b>Nursing &amp; Patient Care</b>
Chad Susott	Dawn Wachal (Menominee)
<b>Behavioral Health</b>	Lana Woodward
Barbara Nelson-Thomas	Christy Hendrickson
<b>Logistics</b>	(Hancock)
Paul Lyman	<b>Patient Admin Service</b>
<b>Nutrition &amp; Environmental</b>	Michelle Borkowski
<b>Support</b>	<b>Pharmacy</b>
Everett Thomas	Holly Fayas
	<b>Medicine</b>
	Alexander Judy

## Farewell Wishes! (\*retired)

<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Nursing &amp; Patient Care</b>
Jeff Church* (30 years)	Michelle Cousineau
<b>Nutrition &amp; Environmental</b>	<b>Patient Admin Service</b>
<b>Support</b>	Donna Camp
Wallace Hardwick	<b>Performance Improvement</b>
	Deb Cini* (36 years)

## Service Pins (Oct-Nov)



Jim Rice (Medical Center Director, far right) presented service pins to (left to right): Robert Whiting (CPAC, 10 years), Bob Gregg (Imaging, 10 years), Darlene Lovato (CPAC, 35 years), and Kevin Barnard (Engineering, 10 years).

Visit us online at [www.ironmountain.va.gov](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov) and follow us on:



Comments? [Email bradley.nelson@va.gov](mailto:bradley.nelson@va.gov)

## Upcoming Events & Observances

### December:



- Nat'l Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month**
- International AIDS Awareness Month**
- 1** World AIDS Day
  - 7** Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (1941)
  - 8** U.S. Enters WWII (1941)
  - 14** Staff Cookie Social (Directors Office)
  - 9-16** Chanukah (Hanukkah)
  - 18** Staff Holiday Luncheon (3rd floor east of Canteen)
  - 20** U.S. Invasion of Panama (1989) (Operation Just Cause)
  - 25** Christmas (Clinics Closed)
  - 26** Kwanzaa Begins (Dec 26-Jan 1)



### January:

- Glaucoma Awareness Month**
- Cervical Cancer Month**
- Thyroid Awareness Month**
- Eye Health Care Month**



- 1** New Year's Day (Clinics Closed)
- 1** Emancipation Proclamation (1863)
- 15-21** Healthy Weight Week
- 16** Gulf War Begins (1991)
- 21** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Clinics Closed)
- 22-28** National Certified Nurse Anesthetist Week



Not pictured are: Jay Harry (ED RN, 30 years), Steven Sicotte (Engineering, 10 years), Dr. Kermit Bott (Optometry, 10 years), and Darren Henkel (VA Police, 30 years).

Correction to Oct issue: Gene Leslie received his 10-year Service Pin, but was incorrectly noted as being assigned to NESS. He works in Engineering.